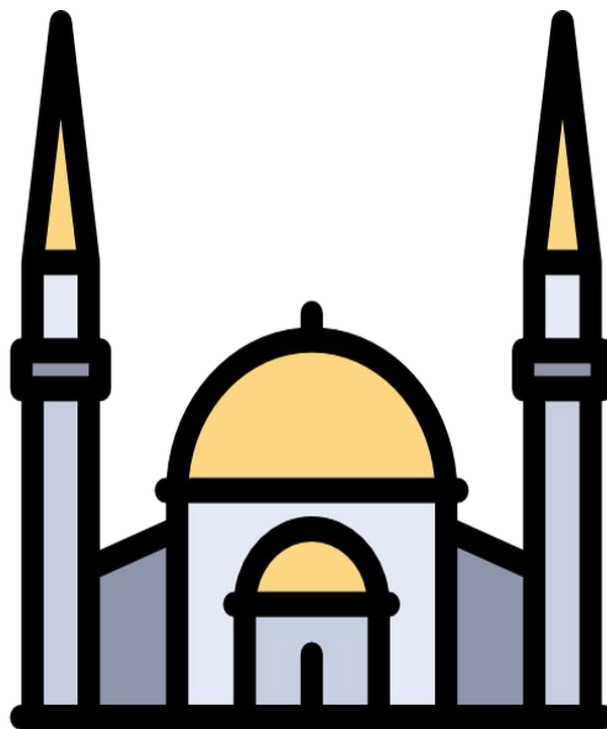




Order of Service



21 August 2022
10 am



Worship led by:
Rev Dr AJ Groenewald
Musician:
Martin Petty and choir

Gathering of God's People

Time when we greet one another and prepare for worship.
Those who are able please stand for the entry of the Bible.
Words of welcome and announcements.

Good morning

I hope you are all well? Welcome to our service of worship.

Please remember our extraordinary Session meeting after our service of Worship.

Worshipping God Together

Call to worship

Minister: Let us all come together
to seek God.

So come as you are with your joys
and sorrows.

ALL: **We come with our thanks
and doubts.**

We come with our fears and hopes.

Minister: Let us come together to seek and worship God.

Beloved I greet you in the Name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

CH4 512 To God be the glory

Opening prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray:

Gracious Lord

We give thanks for rain and cooler weather.
We pray that for those areas of draught
Protect those in danger from flash floods.
Help us to do our bit in redressing the damage
we have done to our climate.

We have made such a mess of everything –
climate change and pollution as well as the
conflict of war. Lord help us to do better and
help all of us to play our part in bringing about

world peace especially in Ukraine but wherever there is strife and discord.

We give thanks for vaccines and especially the new generation ones which will protect against Omicron too. May the uptake for the booster programme be as good as the uptake so far and we pray that all those people who have not yet come forward for vaccination will do so soon.

For all who are ill we pray for healing and wholeness and for the bereaved we pray for Your loving comfort.

Loving Father, You are everything to us – our hope, our strength and our shield. You are our Miracle Worker, our Promise Keeper and our light in the darkness.

Lord, we confess that we have not loved ourselves or other people as you have commanded us. We ask for your forgiveness, knowing that you are gracious and kind, and will forgive the sins of those who repent.

Lord, forgive us our sins.

Lord, deliver us from wickedness.

Even when we are afraid, guilty, angry,
bewildered, we trust in your promises –
hear our prayer and forgive us,

We ask this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our
debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the
kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Exodus 32:1-4 & 7-8

Reader: Ann Shaw

Choir sings CH4 “ “

Reading: Mark 11:15-18

Reader: Ann Shaw

Sermon

I am sure you are all intrigued to know what the relevance is of the two readings, one from the Old and the other from the New Testament.

I am sure you wonder about the relevance between the Golden calf and Jesus' cleansing of the temple grounds...

If you do see/realize the connection, you are just as clever as the writers of the 2022 Passionplay in Oberammergau...

But before I explain the relevance, let me start by telling you a bit more of the Passionplay...



As you all know, during the July schoolbreak, Nanda, my mum, Henro, Nehan and I went to see the Passion Play in Oberammergau. We were supposed to go in 2020, but the performance has been postponed to this year, because of the pandemic.

Attending the Passion Play has been a life-long dream of ours.. never thinking that one day it will be possible to see it for ourselves!

Oberammergau is a lovely wee village in the Bavarian Alps.



Just over 5000 people live there. In 1633, a deadly plague hit Europe. The people in Oberammergau hoped that it would pass them by, but when the first person in the village died of the plague, they all got together, prayed, and pledged to God that if they were spared from the plague, they would perform the story of the passion of Jesus Christ every 10 years.

Although more people got the plague, no-one in the village died from it after that,

and in 1634 the very first Passion Play was performed.

The villagers kept their promise to God, generation after generation, and to this day, every 10 years, the Play is performed.

Word about it spread, and today this is a massive undertaking, with shows being performed from May to October, 5 days a week. This year there was a cast of 2100 people, including 450 children. The youngest was just a wee tot sitting on mum's hip, the oldest 80.

Everyone involved in the Play, from the main characters to the controlling officer, must be born in the village, or lived there for at least 20 years.

Participating in the Play is a huge commitment. They rehearse for a whole year, people need to take time off work when the Play is on, and everybody needs to grow their hair, and men their beards, from Ash Wednesday the year before – which means a 15 month ban on cutting their hair.

They've built an open stage, with the sky and the trees as backdrop. The seats are covered by a huge canopy, as the Play is

performed in all types of weather. The theatre can seat 4500 people, and is usually fully booked, by people from all over the world.

The Play is performed in German, but there are booklets available in lots of different languages, containing the whole script.

You are not allowed to take any photo's during the performance, and although I would have loved to have some pictures to show you, I think it's better that way, because otherwise I might not have been drawn into the story the way I was.

But here are some photo's we took of the stunning surroundings:



The village is surrounded by mountains.



This was taken just outside the theatre – no matter where you look, the scenery is breath-taking.

If you stand in the middle of the village and look at the mountains, you can see at least 3 crosses planted on the peaks of the surrounding hills.

Here is 1. You can hike up to the crosses, but we didn't do that, so this is the only photo we didn't take, It is a google pic!

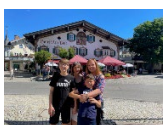


We stayed in a quaint Guesthouse,



and we were charmed by all the wee things they did to make our stay memorable.

This is the hotel we had our dinners at:



Everything is well planned and runs very smoothly. Some people come into the village only for the play, and some, like us, stay for 2 nights.

I loved it that we had time to explore the village and just take it all in.

The Play runs from 2:30-5pm. Then all 4500 people leave for dinner – which is all pre-booked in different hotels and restaurants – and then the 2nd half is from 8-10:30pm.

We were super impressed with how well organised they are. The population almost doubles when the Play is on, and

throughout 2022 there would have been roughly 100 shows, with 500 000 people attending.

The shops have stunning murals painted on the walls:



And the wood carvings are spectacular.

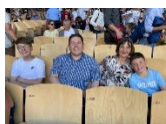
But let's get to the actual Play now. There are bits and pieces of the history on display in the theatre:



And here is the crowd of people waiting to enter the theatre at the side we were at:



The family taking their seats:



And right there, on that stage, with the backdrop changing as the clouds rolled over and birds flew by,



we saw a performance that felt so real, that at times I forgot that this is actually 2022, and that Jesus didn't speak

German. I've never ever experienced something like it in my life.

Seeing a whole village, young and old, perform the last part of Jesus' life story, with so much intense emotion on their faces, was life-changing, to say the least.

Although the story obviously always stays the same, the Play reflects the times we live in, and changes are made to the performance every time to make it relevant to the audience.

This year, at the start each new scene, the mass choir, all dressed in black, like

traditional Jews; accompanied by a symphonic orchestra, sang between the scenes Old Testament passages relevant to the particular part of Jesus' journey on earth.

And this when it becomes to intriguing interesting - bringing passages from the Old and New Testament almost seamlessly together, although they had different contexts.

So before Jesus was clearing the temple the choir sang about the golden calf, while a still scene portrayed the story in the back. The people depicting the scene stood so still, that the boys and I initially

wondered if it was maybe wax dolls and not real people. After which Henro made it his mission to see if he could spot someone who moved their eyes or who's hand trembled a little bit! AT least it kept him busy!!!

This **story in song** and **still portrait** would then link into the next part of the life story of Jesus which would then be acted out.

Imagine Scene 2... The setting was the temple courtyard. The merchants came in with their sheep and goats to sell, and when Jesus got angry about the people changing a holy place into a den of

robbers, he slammed a cage, and doves came flying over us!

It felt so real.

Later, we saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem on an actual donkey, the crowds cheering so loudly it felt as if I was there. And then even later, we saw Pilate entering on horseback, and the people shouting – crucify him. It was hard to watch.

But the boys did bring me back to earth at least a couple of times – when they pointed out that one of the camels was – how can I say – watering the legs of his

handler on the stage, and giggled when another one chewed on a woman's hair!

Like I said, it was very real!

We were very fortunate to have seats close to the front, and that the weather was glorious. I could see the expression of pain on Jesus' face when he got whipped, the anguish in Mary's eyes when she realised what was happening to her son, the tears rolling down Jesus' cheeks when the people just couldn't understand what it was all about.

And we cried when Jesus got crucified

Although I knew they were just acting, it didn't feel like that. I could even see how Jesus' breathing changed when he was hanging there on the cross in agony – for about 20 minutes. I can't bear to imagine what it must have been like for real.

And then, as Jesus breathed his last breath – it was dark. Night has fallen. The blue sky in the background was now pitch black, and the silence was deafening.

And when eventually the women discovered the empty tomb, the lights went on and the whole place was filled with sheer joy.

It was surreal. Impossible to put into words, really....

And then, when we walked out the theatre – it was a beautiful night, with a full moon.



We walked back to our Guesthouse as different people. We were once again touched by a story that we know so well, yet it felt brand new.

The next day we went up into the alps with the ski-lift. As I was looking at everything God made so perfectly around me,



I realised that we came on a pilgrimage.

God touched our lives through the Play and the whole experience, but he touches our lives every single day. We should just be open enough to realise this...

And in a world where the focus is so much more on Power Plays than it is on the Passion Play – I felt encouraged and inspired by all the other pilgrims from all over the world – who came to be reminded what is really important in life.

I was inspired by a whole village keeping a promise to God, passing the importance

of this on to their kids and inspiring them to continue keeping this promise.

They pray back-stage before every performance, and its very clear that the village and especially the cast, has a unity in their purpose.

And what probably touched me most, was the fact that at the end of the play, the audience gave a standing ovation – but none of the actors came back out on stage to take a bow. Because it wasn't about them, all the glory was to God.



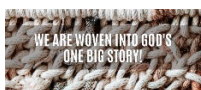
All through the Play Old Testament stories were woven into New Testament stories in a very meaningful way.

The Israelites felt deserted by God, and they made a **golden calf to worship**. Yet, God was right there with them. The place where they could worship God, the temple, became a place where merchants made money selling animals to be sacrificed, when all God wanted was their dedication.

In a way, **nothing has changed**. Today all God wants is our dedication, but we so often follow people, or worldly trends,

losing focus of who really is in control of our lives...

Let's learn from these stories, and not make the same mistakes.



Just like the Old Testament is woven into the New, our lives are woven into God's amazing story too.

We are a part of God's story the real "HIS Story" – generation after generation. It's not just a Play, it's a reality. Jesus died for the Israelites, and for every single one of us, so that our story can ultimately have a happy ending.

So let's dedicate ourselves to God, like the people in that village in Germany, and **rely on him alone**. Let's surrender ourselves fully to Jesus, and show the world that **Passion** and sacrificial love are more important than **Power**.

Amen

CH4 448

Lord, the light of your love is shining

Responding to God's word

Prayer of thanksgiving: Kay Coull

CH4 160

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

Benediction

Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:

Whether your journey takes you
to the mountain-top or the city;
whether you go home alone
or whether you go with others,
go now in confidence,
go now in peace.
And may you know the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
every step of the way through this week and
always.

Sung Amen, Amen, Amen

PRAYER

Thank you, God, for love we share,
thank you, God, for signs of care,
thank you, God, for being there.
Thank you, God, that love is the way,
thank you, God, that hope will stay,
thank you, God, that faith can sway
our hearts to know your truth.

Amen.

You are invited to stay for tea and coffee which are served in the hall.



BALERNO PARISH CHURCH
Intimations
Sunday, 21 August 2022

WORSHIP SERVICES

28 August 2022 @ 10 am Worship service conducted by Rev
Adrian Slough (locum minister at Liberton Northfield Parish)

Extraordinary Kirk Session Meeting

There will be an extraordinary meeting of the Kirk Session in the church after our morning service today, at which information will be shared regarding the most recent developments with the Presbytery's Mission Plan and the implications for the congregation in Balerno.

Walk the Kiltwalk in 2022 for FRESH START

The Kiltwalk returns to Edinburgh on Sunday, 18th September - 3 different distances. Team Balerno will once again take part, raising funds for FRESH START. If you would like to join the team, please get in touch. Sandra Lyall, 449 4375 or sandrallyall@hotmail.com



THE MILL CAFÉ

Open Tuesday – Friday, 9.30am – 2pm

Serving teas/coffees, home baking, snack lunches.

We are a friendly group and are *always delighted to welcome new volunteers to our team*. Pop in and see what we are all about.

THANKS TO YOU...

Thank you for all your generous contributions towards the ministry and mission of the Church. Gift Aid envelopes are available in the wallets at the end of each row.

Sort code 83 - 19 - 15
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Balerno Church of Scotland